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Message Text

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PAGE 01 CAIRO 17597 241632Z
ACTION NODS-00

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 /001 W
----------037962 241637Z /50
O 241622Z JUL 78
FM AMEMBASSY CAIRO
TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 1817
INFO AMEMBASSY AMMAN IMMEDIATE
AMEMBASSY TEL AVIV IMMEDIATE

S E C R E T CAIRO 17597

EXDIS HANDLE AS NODIS CHEROKEE

FOR THE SECRETARY AND ASSISTANT SECRETARY SAUNDERS
AMMAN FOR ATHERTON
TEL AVIV FOR LEWIS

E.O. 11652: XGDS
TAGS: PEPR XF US MO
SUBJECT: ARAB SUMMITRY AND MIDDLE EAST NEGOTIATIONS--
KING HASSAN

REF: RABAT 4437

1. WHILE I AM SURE KING HASSAN WANTS TO BE HELPFUL, I AM NOT SO SURE THAT HIS ARAB SUMMITRY IDEAS ARE THAT SOUND. THE IDEA OF TRYING TO BUILD ARAB SUPPORT FOR THE PEACE INITIATIVE IS LAUDABLE, BUT I DOUBT THAT PROSPECTS FOR DOING SO ARE GOOD. UNTIL AND UNLESS SOMETHING POSITIVE COMES OUT OF CURRENT NEGOTIATIONS IN TERMS OF ISRAELI WILLINGNESS TO WITHDRAW AND TO SOLVE THE PALESTINIAN PROBLEM IN ALL OF ITS ASPECTS, THOSE ARAB LEADERS WHO ARE IN THE FRONT LINE OF THE PEACE PROCESS--AT THE MOMENT THAT IS ONLY SADAT--ARE BOUND TO HAVE DIFFICULTY WINNING ARAB SUPPORT. IT SEEMS TO ME THERE IS NOTHING IN THE CARDS SO FAR AS THE FORESEEABLE
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FUTURE IS CONCERNED THAT OFFERS MUCH PROSPECT OF THE TYPE OF ISRAELI CONCESSIONS THAT WILL BE NEEDED TO WIN WIDER ARAB SUPPORT. I WOULD ADD THAT IT IS SAD BUT TRUE THAT THE GREATER THE DEGREE OF ARAB UNITY, THE LOWER IS THE ARAB CONSENSUS ON WHAT SHOULD BE DONE. ARAB UNITY HAS TRADITIONALLY WORKED ON A LEAST COMMON DENOMINATOR.

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2. OUR PROBLEM AT THE MOMENT IS GETTING SADAT'S AGREE-
MENT TO ANOTHER MEETING, NOT SO MUCH THE PLACE OF THE
MEETING. IF, DESPITE THE ISRAELI REJECTION OF HIS
AL-ARISH/MOUNT SINAI ENCLAVE SUGGESTION, HE IS STILL
WILLING TO MEET AT AL-ARISH, THIS SHOULD BE HIS BUSINESS.
OR IF HE PREFERS SFM, THIS TOO SHOULD BE HIS BUSINESS.
HE KNOWS MORE ABOUT THE NUMAYRI MISSION THAN WE DO AND
I DO NOT THINK, DESPITE KING HASSAN'S DOUBTLESS WELL-
INTENTIONED COUNSEL, THAT WE SHOULD START EXPLORING WITH
SADAT WHETHER ANOTHER MEETING SHOULD BE HELD IN THE UK,
AUSTRIA, NORTH OR SOUTH AMERICA OR ANYWHERE ELSE. IF
HE WANTS ANOTHER MEETING IN EUROPE OR ELSEWHERE, WE MAY
BE SURE THAT HE WILL LET US KNOW. I BELIEVE WE SHOULD
BEAR IN MIND SADAT'S SITUATION VIS-A-VIS THE OTHER
MODERATE ARABS, AFRICANS AND NONALIGNED, BUT OUR SOLICI-
TUDE FOR HIS WELFARE IN THIS REGARD SHOULD NOT BE
GREATER THAN HIS OWN IS.

3. INCIDENTALLY, MEETING AT SFM IS NOT REALLY THAT MUCH
DIFFERENT FROM DIRECT CONTACTS ON ARAB TERRITORY.
EGYPTIANS REGARD ALL OF SINAI AS SOVEREIGN EGYPTIAN
TERRITORY, THEY DO NOT RECOGNIZE SFM AS SOMETHING EXTRA-
TERRITORIAL, AND THERE IS NO US FLAG OVER SFM INSTALLA-
TION. THE LATTER POINT THEY RESISTED TWO YEARS AGO AND,
APART FROM JULY 4 HOLIDAYS, US FLAG IS NOT FLOWN OVER
SFM COMPOUND. THEY RECOGNIZE, OF COURSE,THAT IT IS IN
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UNEF CONTROLLED BUFFER ZONE.

4. SADAT TOLD ME TODAY THAT NUMAYRI AND HIS ARAB
COLLEAGUES CONTINUE TO PRESS HIM TO JETTISON HIS PEACE
INITIATIVE ON THE GROUNDS THAT IT HAS BEEN DEMONSTRABLY
UNSUCCESSFUL. SADAT INSISTS THAT HE DOES NOT AGREE.
DESPITE ISRAELI FAILURE TO MOVE, HE BELIEVES HIS
INITIATIVE HAS HAD A PROFOUND EFFECT ON AMERICAN AND
WORLD PUBLIC OPINION. HENCE, HE IS NOT PREPARED TO GIVE
ASSAD, BOUMEDIENE OR OTHERS THE SATISFACTION OF AD-
MITTING FAILURE. ON AN ARAB SUMMIT, HE REPEATED WHAT
HE HAD SAID TO ME EARLIER: HE HAD TOLD NUMAYRI THAT HE
IS WILLING TO ATTEND AN ARAB SUMMIT, BUT THAT SUMMIT
SHOULD NOT BE CONVENED FOR ANOTHER TWO MONTHS OR SO. IF
THE PEACE PROCESS IS MOVING BY THAT TIME, HE WILL DOUBT-
LESS PRESS FOR FURTHER DEFERRAL OF AN ARAB SUMMIT.

5. AN ARAB SUMMIT, WHENEVER IT IS HELD, IS NOT IN MY
VIEW LIKELY TO BE HELPFUL. I KNOW OF NO ARAB SUMMITS
THAT HAVE HELPED THE PEACE PROCESS. NOR DO I BELIEVE
THAT ANY NEW ARAB SUMMIT WOULD MODIFY THE MANDATE FOR
THE PLO WHICH CAME OUT OF THE 1974 RABAT SUMMIT. THE

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EXCEPTION MIGHT, OF COURSE, BE AN ARAB SUMMIT HELD IN A POLITICAL ENVIRONMENT WHERE THE ISRAELIS HAVE AGREED TO WITHDRAW FROM OCCUPIED ARAB TERRITORY AND RESOLVE THE PALESTINIAN PROBLEM. BUT THIS IS NOT LIKELY TO BE THE CASE IN THE NEAR FUTURE, IF EVER. THE MANAGEMENT OF ANY ARAB SUMMIT WILL BE PRIMARILY RELATED TO SADAT'S SUBSTANTIVE SUCCESS OR LACK THEREOF, AND ONLY SECONDARILY TO EXTRANEOUS TACTICAL MANEUVERING BY PERIPHERAL ARAB LEADERS WHO MAY WANT TO BE HELPFUL BUT ARE NOT THEMSELVES DIRECTLY INVOLVED IN THE ISSUE. EILTS

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